

# Soybeans are Important to Missouri

**S**oybeans are a very important agricultural crop in Missouri. In fact, Missouri ranks sixth among all of the states in amount of soybeans grown. Missouri farmers produced \$791 million dollars worth of soybeans in 2000.

Soybeans were brought to this country in about 1804 from China. They were called soja beans and most farmers were not interested in growing them. Early farmers planted the soybeans and allowed their livestock to eat the plant. It was not until 1904 that George Washington Carver began studying the soybean and its many uses.

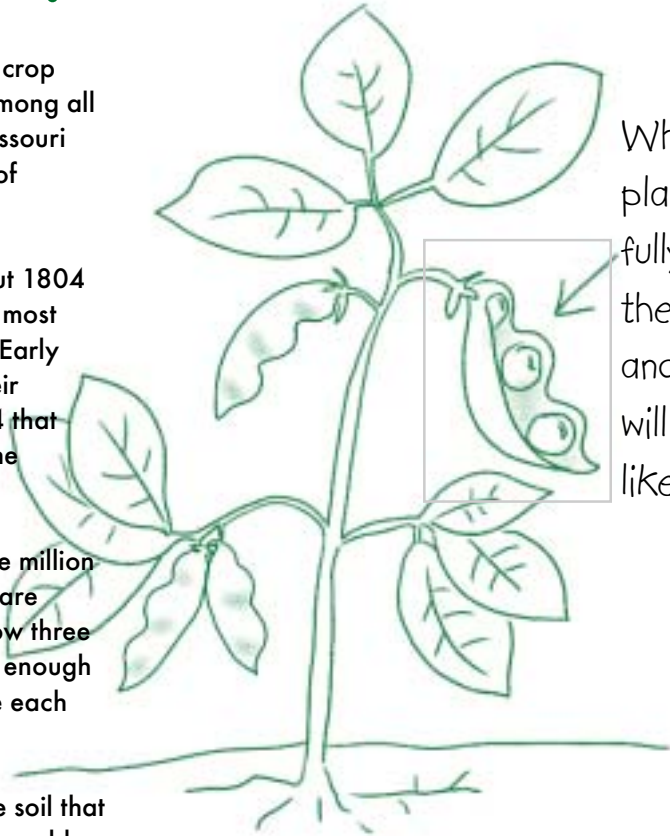
Today, Missouri farms grow approximately five million acres of soybeans each year. Most soybeans are planted in May and June. The plants soon grow three or four feet tall. During the summer, if there is enough rain, hairy pods will form on the plants. Inside each pod, two or three round beans will form.

Soybeans are a type of plant that improves the soil that it grows on. They are called legumes. Legumes add nitrogen back to the soil so that other plants will grow better next year.

In the fall, the soybean plants will shrivel, turn brown, and the leaves will fall off. Large machines called combines will come into the soybean field and they will remove the soybean seeds from the plant. Most soybean seeds are cream colored.

Most farmers will sell their soybeans soon after harvest. The beans will then be processed into a wide variety of products. Most beans will be graded, screened and cleaned. They will then be cracked and rolled to make flakes. Then the oil is removed from the soybeans. Soybean oil is the most common cooking oil. The rest of the bean is then used in food for livestock such as pigs, poultry or even pets.

Researchers are always looking for new uses of soybeans. Some of the newer soybean products include crayons, diesel fuel, and explosives.



When this plant is fully grown the pod and beans will look like this

## Beans, Beans, Beans:

A soybean plant had 80 pods on it. 40 of the pods contained 3 beans each and 40 of the pods contained 2 beans each. How many soybeans were on the plant?

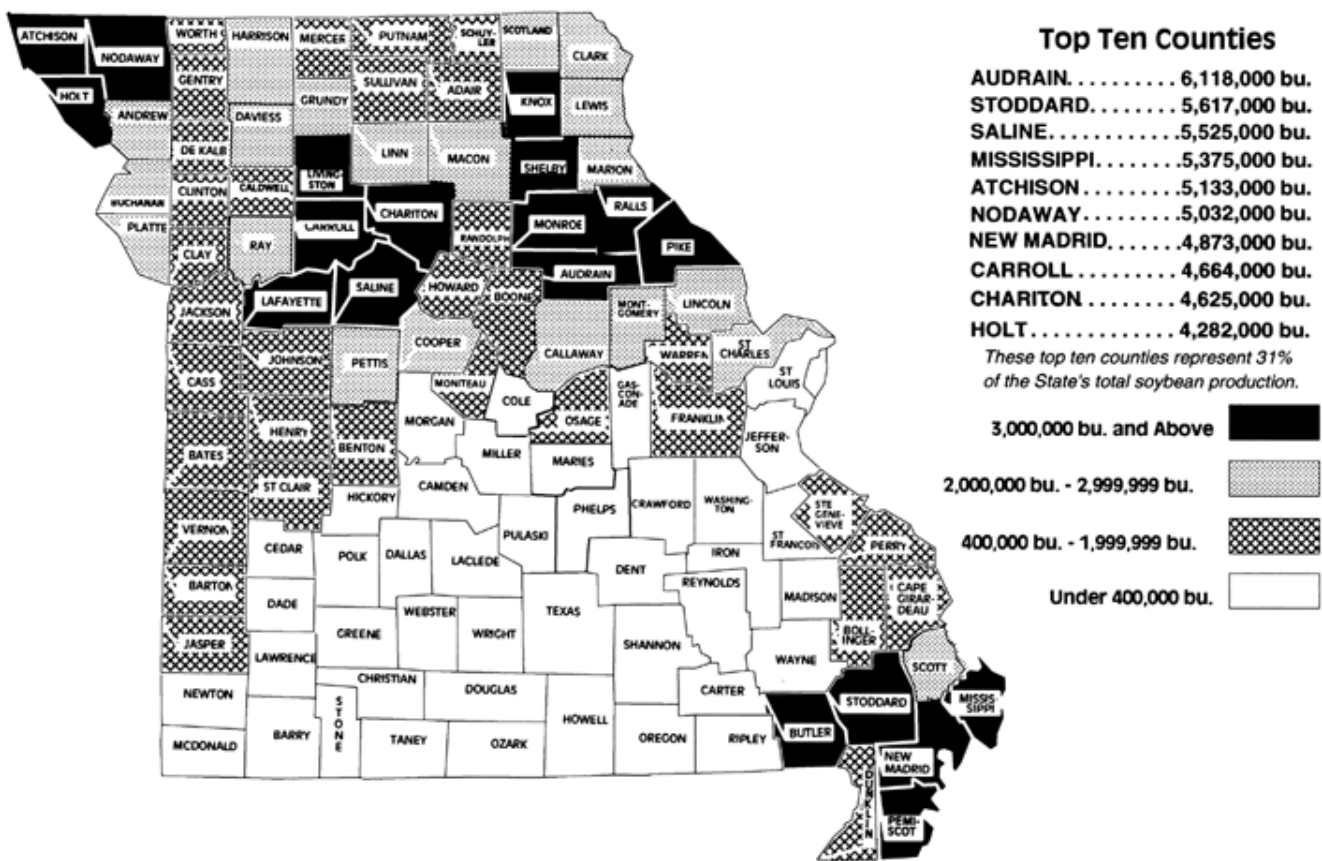
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George Washington Carver conducted his research with soybeans in 1904. How many years ago was that?

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Below is a map of Missouri that shows soybean production in every county. Look at the map and answer these questions,

## 2000 Soybean Production, By Counties



1. How many bushels of soybeans were grown in your county in 2000? -----
2. Is your county among the top ten counties for growing soybeans? -----
- 3.. Why do you think your county ranks where it does? -----

For more information on soybean production and products visit the Missouri Soybean Programs Office website at <http://www.mosoy.org/> or the American Soybean Association at <http://www.asa-europe.org/>